Djibril Chimère Diaw

Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst.

Towards a Federal African Defense

Building a Unified Military Architecture for the Federation of African States South of the Sahara (FASS)

Djibril Chimère DIAW

Copyright

Towards a Federal African Defense: Building a Unified Military Architecture for the Federation of African States South of the Sahara (FASS)

Copyright © 2026 Djibril Chimère DIAW

All rights reserved

About The Author

Djibril Chimère Diaw

Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst.

Dedication

To

my mother Marème Fall

my father Amadou Chimère Diaw

my wife Isabelle Diaw

my children

Fatou-Chimère Diaw, Ahmadou-Chimère Diaw,

Marième-Chimère Diaw, Aïssata-Chimère Diaw .

my grandparents

Fatou Methiour Ndiaye & Waly Sega Fall

Fatou Faye & Souleymane Chimère Diaw

Teachers

To those who shall come into the world a century after me, beginning in the year two thousand and seventy-two.

To all mothers,
to those who made our coming into the world possible through the gift of themselves,
to those who, even today, carry, give birth to, nourish, protect, and raise life,
to those who, tomorrow, will continue to open the path of human existence.

To all women who, in silence or in light, have risked their bodies, their strength, and sometimes their lives so that humanity may endure.
To their quiet courage, their daily resilience, and their founding love.

May this work stand as an act of recognition,
a tribute passed on from generation to generation,
and a word of gratitude addressed to those without whom nothing would have been, nothing is, and nothing will be.

CONTENTS

Towards a Federal African Defense....1
Building a Unified Military Architecture for the Federation of African States South of the Sahara (FASS)....1
Copyright....2
About The Author....3
Dedication....5
ENGLISH....8
Editorial Preface....8
General Introduction....10
Towards a Federal African Defense....11
A Plea for a Unified Military Architecture within a Federation of States in Africa South of the Sahara (FASS)....11
Abstract....11
1. Introduction....12
2. Security Fragmentation as a Structural Weakness....13
2.1 Inefficient Proliferation of National Armies....13
2.2 Strategic Dependence and Loss of Autonomy....13
3. Demographic and Economic Foundations of a Federal Defense....14
3.1 Demographic Mass and Security Responsibility....14
3.2 Economic Rationalization of Defense Effort....14
4. Institutional Architecture of a Federal African Defense....15
4.1 Foundational Principles....15
4.2 Command Chain and Governance....15
5. Geopolitical and Systemic Implications....16
5.1 International Credibility and Deterrence....16
5.2 Federal Defense and Systemic Power....16
6. Objections and Responses....17
7. Conclusion....18
Transversal Conclusion....19

ENGLISH

Editorial Preface

The question of defense occupies a singular place in the architecture of political sovereignty. It is the domain in which the abstract principles of independence, autonomy, and collective will are translated into concrete capacities: the ability to protect territory, secure populations, deter coercion, and act credibly within an international system structured by power asymmetries. For Africa south of the Sahara, this question can no longer be approached through the fragmented prism of inherited national frameworks alone.

This volume advances a clear and rigorous argument: the long-term security, sovereignty, and international standing of Africa south of the Sahara require the construction of a **Unified Defense** within the institutional framework of a **Federation of African States south of the Sahara**. This is not a normative appeal grounded in ideology or sentiment, but a reasoned conclusion drawn from empirical realities, structural constraints, and historical trajectories.

Over the coming decades, Africa south of the Sahara will constitute one of the central demographic and economic poles of the global system. Yet this growing systemic weight contrasts sharply with the persistence of highly fragmented defense architectures, largely shaped by colonial legacies and constrained national capacities. The mismatch between demographic mass, economic potential, and strategic vulnerability represents one of the most profound contradictions of the region’s current position in world affairs.

The articles gathered in this work demonstrate that contemporary security threats—whether asymmetric conflicts, transnational terrorism, organized crime, cyber vulnerabilities, or external geopolitical pressures—are intrinsically regional and systemic in nature. No individual state in the region, regardless of its size or resources, possesses the strategic depth, industrial base, technological autonomy, or financial capacity required to address these challenges sustainably in isolation. Fragmentation, far from guaranteeing sovereignty, perpetuates dependency and weakens collective agency.

The plea for a unified defense articulated here rests on a simple but powerful premise: **security benefits from scale**. A federal defense structure would enable the pooling of resources, the rationalization of military expenditures, the development of a continental defense-industrial base, and the emergence of credible deterrence and strategic autonomy. Properly designed, such a defense would not erase national identities or democratic accountability, but would embed them within a higher-level institutional framework governed by civilian control, transparency, and shared political responsibility.

Crucially, this work situates defense within a broader systemic vision. A unified defense is not an isolated military project; it is a cornerstone of a wider federal trajectory encompassing economic integration, monetary coordination, diplomatic coherence, and institutional convergence. Defense, in this sense, becomes both a consequence and a catalyst of political unity.

This book does not claim that the path toward a federal defense will be simple or linear. On the contrary, it acknowledges the legal, political, cultural, and institutional complexities involved. Yet it

insists that the cost of inaction—continued fragmentation, strategic vulnerability, and geopolitical marginalization—is far greater than the challenges of collective construction.

By grounding its argument in data, comparative analysis, and systemic reasoning, this volume invites scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike to reconsider prevailing assumptions about security and sovereignty in Africa south of the Sahara. It calls for a shift in scale, perspective, and ambition: from dispersed national defenses to a shared strategic horizon commensurate with the region's demographic weight, economic potential, and historical responsibility.

In doing so, it contributes to a necessary and timely debate—one that concerns not only Africa's security, but its capacity to act as a fully sovereign and responsible actor in the emerging global order.

General Introduction

The question of defense constitutes the hard core of any genuine political sovereignty. It cannot be reduced either to the possession of armed forces or to the formal existence of national military institutions, but rather refers to the effective capacity of a political entity to guarantee the security of its territory, its population, and its collective choices within an international environment structured by asymmetric power relations.

Africa south of the Sahara currently stands at a pivotal moment in its history. On the one hand, demographic projections confirm that it will become, over the course of the twenty-first century, one of the principal centers of gravity of the world's population. On the other hand, its security structures remain fragmented, largely inherited from colonial borders and military doctrines designed at the scale of states with limited strategic, technological, and financial resources. This mismatch between demographic weight, economic potential, and strategic weakness constitutes one of the continent's major vulnerabilities.

The multiplication of transnational threats — asymmetric conflicts, regional terrorism, organized crime, cyberattacks, and external geopolitical pressures — highlights the structural limits of strictly national defense arrangements. No state in Africa south of the Sahara, taken in isolation, currently possesses the strategic depth, industrial base, or technological capabilities necessary to respond sustainably to these challenges. This situation perpetuates a persistent security dependence on external powers, undermining the effective sovereignty of states and constraining their political room for maneuver.

It is within this context that the advocacy for a **Single Defense** within a **Federation of States of Africa south of the Sahara** takes shape. Far from reflecting institutional idealism, this proposal responds to a systemic logic: as security challenges become globalized and economies of scale increasingly decisive, defense can no longer be conceived as a strictly national prerogative, but rather as a strategic federal competence. A common defense would make it possible to pool resources, rationalize military expenditures, develop an African industrial and technological base, and enhance the continent's geopolitical credibility.

The ambition of this work is therefore twofold. On the one hand, it seeks to demonstrate that the current fragmentation of defense policies in Africa south of the Sahara constitutes a major strategic cost. On the other hand, it aims to show that a federal defense, democratically controlled and articulated around a shared political project, represents not only a viable option, but a necessary condition for the emergence of a fully assumed African sovereignty within the contemporary international system.

Towards a Federal African Defense

A Plea for a Unified Military Architecture within a Federation of States in Africa South of the Sahara (FASS)

Abstract

Security constitutes one of the major blind spots in reflections on African integration. While Africa south of the Sahara concentrates a growing share of the world's population and a non-negligible aggregate economic weight, its defense arrangements remain fragmented, redundant, and structurally dependent on external powers. This article argues that the establishment of a single federal defense within a Federation of States in Africa south of the Sahara is neither a utopian project nor a mere political option, but a systemic necessity. Drawing on demographic, economic, geopolitical, and institutional arguments, it demonstrates that only a federal military architecture can ensure collective sovereignty, sustainable security, and strategic credibility for the continent in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: federal defense; collective security; African integration; sovereignty; systemic power; Africa south of the Sahara.

1. Introduction

Defense is one of the fundamental attributes of any sovereign political entity. Without an autonomous capacity to protect its territory, its populations, and its vital interests, no political construction can claim genuine sovereignty. Yet in Africa south of the Sahara, defense continues to be conceptualized almost exclusively within a strictly national framework, inherited from colonial borders and fragmented state structures.

This fragmentation stands in stark contrast to the region's demographic and economic dynamics. By 2050, Africa south of the Sahara will count approximately 2.1 billion inhabitants; by 2100, more than 3.3 billion. Such a human mass, concentrated within a continuous geographical space, cannot sustainably be protected by a mosaic of weakly coordinated, under-equipped national armed forces that are often dependent on asymmetric security partnerships.

This article advances the argument that a **single, integrated Defense**, embedded within a **Federation of States in Africa south of the Sahara**, constitutes the only structurally coherent response to contemporary and future security challenges.

2. Security Fragmentation as a Structural Weakness

2.1 Inefficient Proliferation of National Armies

Africa south of the Sahara comprises more than forty national armed forces, each endowed with distinct doctrines, command chains, budgetary calendars, and external partners. This proliferation generates:

- high and redundant fixed costs;
- a dispersion of technological and human capabilities;
- a chronic inability to conduct large-scale operations without external support.

In practice, no national army in the region independently commands the full spectrum of modern defense capabilities: strategic intelligence, cybersecurity, integrated air defense, rapid projection, and credible deterrence.

2.2 Strategic Dependence and Loss of Autonomy

The direct consequence of this fragmentation is structural dependence on extra-African actors. Training, intelligence, logistics, and even direct intervention are frequently provided by external powers.

This situation constrains African decision-making autonomy, weakens international bargaining power, and exposes regional security to fluctuations in exogenous geopolitical interests.

3. Demographic and Economic Foundations of a Federal Defense

3.1 Demographic Mass and Security Responsibility

A population numbering in the billions constitutes both a potential force and a major responsibility. The protection of such a population cannot be conceived at a micro-state scale. Contemporary threats—transnational terrorism, organized crime, cyberattacks, and hybrid conflicts—transcend inherited borders.

A federal defense would allow for:

- the pooling of personnel and expertise;
- long-term strategic planning;
- a response capacity commensurate with the scale of threats.

3.2 Economic Rationalization of Defense Effort

From an economic perspective, a federal defense would generate substantial efficiency gains:

- economies of scale in equipment procurement;
- development of an African defense industrial and technological base;
- reduction of duplicated national military expenditures.

Defense spending, currently fragmented and often inefficient, could become a lever for industrialization, innovation, and technological upgrading.

4. Institutional Architecture of a Federal African Defense

4.1 Foundational Principles

A unified federal defense would rest on several structuring principles:

- strict subordination to civilian federal political authority;
- gradual integration of existing national forces;
- a common doctrine of collective security and defense.

4.2 Command Chain and Governance

Federal military governance would involve:

- a Federal Security and Defense Council;
- a unified Federal General Staff;
- integrated regional forces operating under central command.

Such an architecture would ensure both operational effectiveness and democratic control.

5. Geopolitical and Systemic Implications

5.1 International Credibility and Deterrence

A federal defense would confer unprecedented strategic credibility upon Africa south of the Sahara. It would transform the region:

- from an object of international security,
- into a full-fledged actor in global stability.

Deterrence would no longer rely on foreign presence, but on a collective, legible, and autonomous capacity.

5.2 Federal Defense and Systemic Power

In the international system, power derives not only from GDP or population, but from the capacity to protect and project these resources. A unified defense would logically complement:

- a federal currency;
- an integrated internal market;
- a coherent federal diplomacy.

It would constitute one of the pillars of African systemic power.

6. Objections and Responses

Critics frequently invoke:

- political and cultural diversity;
- the risk of excessive centralization;
- national sovereignty.

These objections conflate formal sovereignty with effective sovereignty. A federal defense does not abolish sovereignty; it renders it effective at the scale relevant to the twenty-first century.

7. Conclusion

The creation of a single defense for a Federation of States in Africa south of the Sahara is not an isolated military ambition. It is a political, economic, and historical requirement that follows directly from the continent’s demographic and systemic trajectory.

In a world structured by continental-scale entities endowed with integrated defense capabilities, the persistence of African military fragmentation amounts to a permanent vulnerability. Conversely, a federal defense would provide the institutional conditions necessary for sustainable security, collective sovereignty, and the emergence of Africa as a fully constituted actor on the global stage.

The question, therefore, is not whether Africa south of the Sahara can establish a unified defense, but how much longer it can afford not to do so.

Transversal Conclusion

The transversal analysis developed throughout this work leads to an unequivocal conclusion: the issue of defense can no longer be treated as a peripheral technical domain or as a simple aggregation of national capacities. It constitutes the very foundation of the political, economic, and diplomatic credibility of Africa south of the Sahara in the twenty-first-century world.

The current fragmentation of military arrangements, far from guaranteeing state sovereignty, instead reveals its fragility. It generates budgetary inefficiencies, increased technological dependence, strategic vulnerability to transnational threats, and a lasting marginalization within global geopolitical balances. Conversely, a **federal Single Defense**, conceived as a shared competence at the highest political level, would make it possible to transform the demographic and territorial mass of Africa south of the Sahara into genuine strategic power.

Such a common defense cannot, however, be conceived as an instrument of authoritarian centralization. It requires a rigorous institutional framework based on democratic civilian control, operational subsidiarity, budgetary transparency, and respect for the political and cultural diversity of member states. The objective is not the disappearance of national armies, but their gradual integration into a coherent federal architecture capable of acting both at the regional and international levels.

Beyond its strictly military dimension, a federal defense constitutes a structuring lever for the entire African federal project. It fosters the emergence of a continental defense industry, stimulates technological innovation, strengthens strategic autonomy, and consolidates Africa’s capacity to define and defend its own interests. It thus fits into a broader dynamic combining economic integration, monetary convergence, diplomatic coordination, and collective political assertion.

Ultimately, the true issue is not whether Africa south of the Sahara can establish a Single Defense, but whether it can afford not to do so. At a time when major continental blocs structure the international system, persisting in security fragmentation would amount to accepting lasting marginalization. Conversely, the choice of a federal defense would mark a decisive step toward the constitution of a **Federation of States of Africa south of the Sahara**, capable of fully assuming its place, its responsibilities, and its sovereignty in the emerging world order.